

FLIGHT JACKET

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Miramar Marines leave for OIF II

Corps' senior enlisted bids farewell to deploying 3rd MAW Marines

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Emotions ran high for hundreds of deploying 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marines and their families here, including visiting Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, as they prepared to leave for Iraq late into the night Feb. 12.

The sergeant major of the Marine Corps flew in from the East Coast to speak with 3rd MAW Marines before their departure after visiting with Marines at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune and Marine Corps Air Station New River earlier that day.

He told them he wanted to thank them and give his best wishes personally before they departed on their deployment to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

"In some ways I am looking at you and thinking of last year as I was getting ready to go back out (to Iraq) with you, and I can't be-

lieve you are getting ready to go again," expressed Estrada to combat-ready Marines inside Hangar 4.

Estrada, who served previously as the 3rd MAW sergeant major and was forward deployed in support of Operation Enduring and Iraqi Freedom before assuming his current position last summer, said he wanted to let the Marines know that they have America's full support.

"There is a big need for us to go back to Iraq, and believe it or not, everyone in Washington knows that you are going to make a difference," he explained. "I have to tell you that I wish I was going to be a part of this group going back. I am sorry that I can't, but I promise you that I will come visit you."

About 450 3rd MAW Marines boarded aircraft late in the evening following Estrada's farewell speech. They are part of the first major group of approximately 5,000 Marines scheduled to leave



A 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marine preparing to deploy for Operation Iraqi Freedom II holds his Marine Corps Combat Utility Uniform desert MARPAT utility cap with an American flag sewn inside. Others had pictures of home, family or friends inside their head gear. Photo by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

here over the next few weeks to Iraq.

The Marines include elements of Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 and 16, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352, Marine Air Control Group 37, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 and Marine Wing Support Squadron 374.

The units, which consists of pilots, crews, maintenance and other personnel, will support ground troops in Iraq with a fleet of helicopters and cargo planes from at least two air bases west of Baghdad.

The sergeant major also expressed his understanding of the sacrifices every Marine and family member has endured since the start of the war, as many will be returning to Iraq for a second time and some going for the first.

Estrada asked that the Marines continue to do what is asked of them and to trust in their leadership, as he truly believes that the Marines will get the job done.

"From what I have seen since I left 3rd MAW ... Marines are motivated. They are enthusiastic, and

they are going to go out and do the mission, but they also want to know when this thing will be ending," he said. "I will ask you to think of this when you are having tough times over there. You think back to those Marines that preceded you, that fought in places like Iwo Jima, Tarawa and Vietnam. They had it tough, too. And guess what? They always came out on top, and you are going to do the same thing."

Although there was no official statement made by the sergeant major as to when the Corps' mission will end, 21-year-old Lance Cpl. Zachary West, ordnance technician, HMH-466, still felt motivated by his speech and was glad to see him come out to speak to the Marines before they left.

"It's good to hear from the top on what's going on (in the government and the Marine Corps)," said West, an Atlanta native, who is leaving on his first deployment after serving more than two years in the Corps. "It says a lot that he came here to see us off. It's hard on everybody."

West added that although he is a bit nervous about the possible

dangers lurking in Iraq, he feels a little excitement as well because he is doing something not many other people have an opportunity to do. He said he wants to do a good job and hopes to come back home safely at the end of his deployment.

"I am just ready to get it over with," West said.

There were few family members who came to see the Marines off and give last good-byes, so Marines were able to catch up on some rest, watch television or play cards before boarding the plane to Iraq.

However, for the few families who did show up, the sense of sadness could be clearly seen on their faces as they stood watching their loved ones pick up their weapons and battle gear and march out onto the darkened flight line.

"I am nervous about him leaving and us being apart," said Rachel Romero, wife of Lance Cpl. Jose Romero, Avionics, MALS-16, and Loraine, Ohio, native. "He'll get the job done out there. I'll get my job done here, and we'll come back together by the end of the year."



Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, 15th sergeant major of the Marine Corps, speaks with 3rd MAW Marines at Hangar 4 before they departed Miramar for Iraq Feb. 12. The Marines are the first major group here to be leaving on a deployment to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

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Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



62°/45°
Today



62°/47°
Saturday



64°/45°
Sunday

Mentoring the future



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MALS-11 throws a party



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Defending our right to vote

Voter registration encouraged for all servicemembers

The Honorable Gordon R. England

Secretary of the Navy

Today Sailors and Marines are deployed throughout the world, often in harm's way, protecting our nation and supporting the cause of freedom and democracy. In many places, the struggle centers on one very basic but powerful principle of democracy – the right to vote.

In our country, we have that right as a result of past and present sacrifices of U.S. servicemen and women like you.

Therefore, it is particularly appropriate that you, who

protect this right for all of us, also exercise this right for yourself. It's your sacrifice, it's your country and it's your future.

You've earned this right and your vote counts.

I encourage you to register to vote early this year. Do it now to eliminate potential problems later. Your command's voting assistance officer has the absentee voter registration materials.

Thanks for your untiring service to America and to our democratic ideals. God bless you and your families and God bless America.

World War II vet remembers Iwo Jima

Story by Cpl. Wayne Campbell

MCAS New River Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION NEW RIVER, N.C. – The battle of Iwo Jima, memorialized by the monument in Washington, is probably one of the most well-known Marine Corps victories of the 20th century.

The anniversary of the famous flag rising on Mount Suribachi is Feb. 23, and retired Sgt. Maj. Ed Schnug, an Alexandria, Va., native who was visiting New River with the 2nd Marine Division Association Jan. 29, doesn't remember too much about the landing, but he does remember the fog of war that overwhelmed the landing troops on Iwo Jima.

"The landing was very confusing," said Schnug, who was a staff sergeant with 4th Marines Weapons Battalion at the time he landed on Iwo Jima. "The sand was so soft that we couldn't move anywhere. Everything just fell apart, and we lost a lot of troops."

The 8-square-mile volcanic island of Iwo Jima, which means sulfur island, was strategically important to the United States in World War II as an air base for fighter escorts, supporting long range bombing missions against mainland Japan.

Three days before the Marines landed on the beaches of the island, the Air Force and Army Air Corps bombarded the island in the longest sustained aerial offensive of the war. The attack had little effect on the approximately 22,000 Japanese defenders.

At 2 a.m. Feb. 19, 1945, U.S. Navy battleship guns signaled the beginning of the attack. During a pause in the gunfire, 100 bombers attacked the island, followed by another barrage of naval guns.

At 8:30 a.m., the Marines headed toward the shores with the objective of capturing Mount Suribachi, which guarded the beaches. Approximately 30,000 Marines from the 3rd, 4th and 5th Marine Divisions landed at 8:59 a.m.



Courtesy photo

than 26,000 casualties, including 6,800 deaths. Of the 22,000 Japanese defenders, only 1,083 survived the battle.

By the end of the war, 2,400 B-29 bombers carrying 27,000 crewmen made unscheduled landings on the island.

"The Marines who landed on Iwo Jima were very young and dedicated," said Schnug. "They knew that taking the island would give the Americans the advantage."

Twenty-seven Medals of Honor were awarded to Marines and Sailors of Iwo Jima, more than any other single operation during the war.

Miramar Mail



"Are there any plans to get high-speed Internet in the barracks?"

Cpl. Casey Lyons
Air Traffic Controller
H&HS

In order to provide quicker Internet access to Marines and Sailors residing in the Air Station's barracks and bachelor enlisted quarters, the Sprint phone office is in the process of installing high-speed access.

The service offered will be a Paradigm Digital Subscriber Line, most commonly known as DSL, and will allow customers to achieve a data transfer rate of up to 2.2 mega bytes per second. The high speed Internet access not only works up to 35 times faster than dial-up but also allows users to use their telephone and be logged on to the Internet at the same time.

The service will cost \$27.50 per month, with a monthly DSL modem rental fee of \$10. Customers can bypass that fee by purchasing a modem for \$100.

Sprint is hoping to have the service up and running by mid-March.



Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti

Editor's note:

E-mail your questions to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar at:
ombpaoflight@miramar.usmc.mil
Please include "Question to the General" in the subject line.

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Combat Correspondents



Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, 15th sergeant major of the Marine Corps, speaks to deploying Miramar Marines here Feb. 13. The Marine Corps' top enlistee stressed the importance of the Marine Corps mission in Iraq and the principles of good leadership during his talk with noncommissioned officers. Photo by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

Sgt. Maj. of the Marine Corps: 'You will make a difference'

Story by Lance Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

On Feb. 13, the 15th sergeant major of the Marine Corps addressed 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing personnel preparing to deploy to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

During Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada's two-day Miramar visit to meet with the deploying Marines and their families, the Marine Corps' top enlistee presented his views on the direction of the Marine Corps and delivered a motivational message to the enlisted leadership of Marine Aircraft Group 16.

"We're going to stay the course in Iraq," said Estrada, who has served in the Marine Corps for almost 30 years. "We're going to be there a while, and you will make a difference."

The sergeant major touched upon several topics during his briefing to staff non-commissioned officers, focusing on the status and future of the Corps and credited their leadership for the successes of the Marines.

"Right now there is a lot of stress on the force," said Estrada.

"We have Marines who have been deployed for a long time who deserve to come home. We have Marines in Africa, Bosnia, the former Soviet republic of Georgia and Afghanistan who are doing an excellent job, and now more are going back to Iraq for OIF II."

Estrada also discussed some of the Corps' ongoing efforts to adopt revolutionary concepts with new technological developments and weapons systems, such as the MV-22 Osprey and the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, and noted that OIF has affected the priorities of the force.

"I'm going to testify before Congress later this month, and I'm going to fight to get more money for the Marine Corps so we don't have to do more with less," said Estrada, who also served as the sergeant major of 3rd MAW. "We're going to make sure you get more funding to keep winning battles. We're going to take care of you."

The sergeant major also told the Marines

that other issues, including quality of life, sexual harassment policy and, in particular, the importance of mentorship and professionalism by noncommissioned officers, are of serious concern to him and the Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Michael W. Hagee.

"Today's young Marines are our future," explained Estrada. "They're smart, they ask questions, and they're a different breed of Marine."

Estrada said it is vitally important to set a positive example for younger Marines to follow while encouraging them to do "more than the minimum" and to be inquisitive.

"A good leader is someone who is enthusiastic," explained Estrada. "Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm. It's also very important for a leader to be optimistic and approachable while having the moral courage and the will to address problems."

'Today's young Marines are our future. They're smart, they ask questions, and they're a different breed of Marine.'

Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada

Remembering that the Marine Corps has always responded to the nation's call around the world in tough times, Estrada said that Marines in the past in Okinawa, the Chosin Reservoir and Vietnam persevered and endured those hardships and set an example for other Marines to follow today in similar adversity.

"You all make us proud," Estrada remarked. "Hang in there in these tough times. The Corps needs you to do your part for the country in Iraq."

Before closing his address to answer questions from the Marines, Estrada expressed his appreciation for the support and sacrifices of the families that help Marines win battles - past, present and future.

Estrada added that the Marines would continue to provide a critical role in Iraq while serving the needs of the country throughout the globe.

"Right now the Corps is busy around the world, but people expect us as Marines to be different," Estrada said. "We are going to make a difference for the people of Iraq."

"We serve with a sense of duty to the country and the Corps, and you will be a part of history."

NMCRS to launch fundraising campaign, honors 100 years

Story by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Since 1904, the Navy Marine Corps Relief Society has helped Marines and Sailors in time of need with financial aid and counseling.

Now in their 100th year of service, the NMCRS is calling upon Marines and Sailors to help them during the 2004 NMCRS Fund Drive.

During the drive, sub-area eight, which includes MCAS Miramar, is setting a goal to exceed last year's contributions of more than \$112,000 and 100 percent Marine and Sailor contact. Although more than \$112,000 was raised in the Miramar area last year, sub-area eight received more than \$758,000 in almost 1,500 cases, making donations very important.

When the military is involved in low-intensity conflict, NMCRS is important according to Master Sgt. G. Chiriboga, NMCRS project coordinator.

"There is a good chance that some of the families will be enduring some sort of hardship during deployments, and somebody is going to have to take care of them," said Chiriboga.

In order to achieve the fund-raising goals, Chiriboga said that Marines need to realize even a little donation can mean a lot to a recipient.

"You should give whatever you feel is necessary. Even if it is just a dollar a month, it really adds up," she said. "A dollar is the equivalent to a drink at the store, and everyone can sacrifice that at least once a month."

The fund drive coordinators are currently seeking out unit representatives to help spread the word about the NMCRS and set up fund-raisers throughout their units.

Chiriboga said that Marines or Sailors interested in being a unit coordinator should contact their unit sergeant major.

For more information call 577-1807.



Say 'ahhh!'

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. Navy dental personnel around the globe encourage servicemembers, their families and Department of Defense personnel to practice regular oral hygiene to prevent cavities and the occurrence of serious dental problems. Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Scott Dunn

SMP kicks off mentoring program at La Mesa Middle School

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

LA MESA, Calif. – Miramar's Single Marine Program and La Mesa Spring Valley Middle School teamed up in an effort to influence students to achieve success with a mentoring program that began Feb. 10.

Alisa Hertzler, SMP coordinator, said she has been looking forward to beginning the program since last year, but deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom prevented many servicemembers from participating.

"We've been looking at doing a student mentoring program but were unsure of what was going on with the war and people leaving so we decided to hold off last year," she said.

This year was no different because once again Marines and Sailors at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar have been tapped for another tour in Iraq. However, enough responses to a recent call for volunteers made it possible for the SMP to participate in the mentoring program, she said.

"I think it's nice for them to put (the war) aside and focus on helping somebody else," she said. "It is our hope that MCAS Miramar will set the standard for a successful program and establish a valuable tradition that will continue through the years."

Jay Anderson, Spring Valley Middle School guidance counselor, first introduced the idea of having a mentoring program last year to Marines at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and was very pleased with how well the program worked. Depot Marines were unable to participate in the program this year, so in order to continue providing positive role models for students at the school, he turned to the SMP at Miramar



Lance Cpl. James E. Fowler, Group Personnel Administrative Center, Marine Aircraft Group 16, gets to know 11-year-old Michael Farr for the first time through the Single Marine Program at Spring Valley Middle School Feb. 10. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas.

with the idea for Marine mentors.

"I know that Marines and children work well together from (community relations) activities that I did overseas and (in the United States)," said Anderson, who retired as a Marine colonel after 30 years of service. "We are always looking for somebody who can be a positive role model for these kids."

He was not surprised at the potential of how well the program would be this year as students and their mentors made their introductions in the school library. It was a little awkward for both students and mentors, but they soon felt at ease as the sessions moved along.

"The first couple of meetings are going to be just getting to know each other, estab-

lishing some trust and rapport," Anderson explained. "A lot of the kids want someone they can talk to and share some feelings with. These Marines and Sailors provide that to them."

Anderson said the servicemembers interact with the youth as positive role models in a one-on-one or one-on-two same gender setting. Meetings take place on the school's campus in a supervised environment for a two-hour block on a weekly schedule.

"Every (Marine and Sailor) in there is by definition a success because they know what boot camp is like and have tied effort with achievement," he said.

According to Anderson, there are a number of students living in single parent homes, have families with no history of college and

have no high expectations for achievement. As mentors, he is eager to see how the Marines and Sailors interact with the students as well as teach them how hard work and dedication can bring success in their lives.

"I am hoping through the association over the next few weeks that the kids will say, 'Hey, here is someone who is not much older than I am, they may have come from a similar background than I have, and they are successful'," Anderson said. "I want to give (the students) a positive near-peer role model."

There are many reasons why Marines and Sailors decide to volunteer as mentors to young students. Cpl. Jason J. Branagan, network administrator, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38, mentioned his desire to become a teacher after the Marine Corps as a reason for volunteering his time to be a mentor for Spring Valley students.

"I want to meet a couple of kids and hopefully make a difference," said Branagan, a Las Vegas native. "I think having someone other than a teacher or counselor they can relate to helps out a lot."

When "Mr. Anderson" asked who would like to talk with Marines and Sailors on a weekly basis, many students didn't hesitate.

"I can discuss my problems with them," said 11-year-old Michael Farr.

The sixth grader spent time with his mentor, Lance Cpl. James E. Fowler, Group Personnel Administrative Center, Marine Aircraft Group 16, talking about school and showing him his notebook and pictures he drew. He said although being a Marine sounds good, being a football star is what he would like to be the most.

"We get to learn about what the Marines do," Farr said. "(The Marines) are pretty strict, and you have to keep up your grades in order to do things you want to do."

Vehicle Registration Office moves to new location

Story by Pfc. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Vehicle Registration Office here relocated Jan. 5 from the East Gate to building 6274.

This is just a temporary location until the new Vehicle Registration Office opens in a few years, said Mandy J. Hermel, traffic court clerk and Newulm, Minn., native.

In addition to issuing vehicle registration stickers to active duty personnel, dependents, DoD employees and retired servicemembers, the Vehicle Registration Office offers other services including flightline access, accident investigation, traffic coordination and civilian court liaison.

According to Master Sgt. Gabriel Flores Jr., Vehicle Reg-

istration Office staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, and El Paso, Texas, native, the registration process is quick and takes approximately 15 minutes.

No appointment is necessary to process a Department of Defense vehicle sticker.

Flores said to complete the process the vehicle owner must provide a few documents including valid state registration, a driver's license, proof of insurance and military I.D.

All active duty military personnel younger than 26 must also bring in proof of completing the Driver's Improvement Course.

To register a motorcycle, drivers must also provide a certificate of completion from the Motorcycle Foundation or the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America Motorcycle Safety

Course.

Vehicles made in or before 2001 that are not registered in California also need proof of a certified smog emissions test.

In addition, the vehicle must be present and conform to California Vehicle Code standards.

Active duty servicemembers have five working days after checking in or purchasing a vehicle to obtain proper registration, explained Hermel.

"Driving a vehicle without a decal can result in a defective citation, which can lead to a loss of driving privileges," she said.

The Vehicle Registration Office is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information call 577-6247.



Cpl. Jeremy B. Willet, Vehicle Registration Office noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Provost Marshal's Office, applies a decal to a vehicle at the newly-relocated Vehicle Registration Office. Photo by Pfc. Skye Jones



Fire Chief Jerry Sack (right), Miramar Fire Department, gives a tour of Fire Station 61 here during the Quarterly West Coast Fire Chiefs and Training Chiefs Conference Feb. 9-10. The conference included a tour of the station and the burned out areas on East Miramar and Scripps Ranch caused by the Cedar Fire last October. Fire Station 61 is undergoing a \$1.2 million anti-terrorism/force protection upgrade. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

West Coast Marine fire, training chiefs exchange ideas

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The quarterly Marine Corps Fire Chiefs and Training Chiefs Conference was held at the Officers' Club here Feb. 9-10.

The conference included civilian fire personnel representing Marine Corps fire stations in California, Arizona, Nevada and Iwakuni, Japan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss numerous topics and issues with the intent of improving fire-fighting capabilities within their respective areas of responsibility, according to Miramar Fire Chief Jerry Sack.

"It brings ideas and solutions that one chief might not be aware," he said.

One of the subjects discussed during the conference was the Cedar Fire that burned more than 19,000 acres here, most of which is on East Miramar.

The Cedar Fire, which swept through here last October, was the largest of all the fires in the San Diego region and covered more than 280,000 acres.

The chiefs and training officers took a tour of some of the burned out areas on East Miramar and neighboring Scripps Ranch and were surprised at the extent of the damage.

Recovery from the fire has begun nearly four months after the fire started, as vegetation has returned to some of the areas. However, many of the owners of the nearly 318 homes destroyed in the Scripps Ranch area have not begun construction.

"Even the best prepared fire plans didn't work in the Cedar Fire, most of it was a result of the Santa Ana winds," Sack explained. "We showed (the chiefs and training officers) everything we did during the fire and the damage it caused."

Their next stop along the tour - was Fire Stations 61 and 62 to view new equipment and multi-million dollar anti-terrorism/force protection upgrades the stations will soon undergo. Sack said some of the upgrades include the installation of new sprinkler systems and retrofitting upgrades to the main structure of the building.

"The Miramar fire station is one of the first Marine Corps fire stations to be

upgraded to meet the AT/FP requirements," Sack said. "They were very interested in that and the amount of work that goes into it."

The conference also included the introduction of paramedic ambulance services being conducted by the Marine fire departments. The Marine Corps is the first branch of service to have their civilian fire department assume paramedic ambulance service for all the Marine bases, according to Sack. Some Marine bases including Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command Twentynine Palms began using the ambulance service last year.

"We are going to begin our paramedic ambulance program in (fiscal year 2007)," Sack said. "We are one of the last Marine bases to get the service."

Sack added that all the Marine Corps fire chiefs and training officers were pleased with how fire stations operate here and feel they are years ahead of all the other departments as far as having good fire equipment, good training and great fire stations.

"All the Marine Corps fire chiefs and training officers that were here were extremely impressed with our superior facilities that we have here to include our two fire stations, all our fire apparatus and all our training qualifications," he said.

The results from issues and subjects discussed during the conference will be gathered and brought to the yearly International Association of Fire Chiefs Conference in August, according to Sack.



Marine wife sets up 'Red Devil' husband with television show remodeling project

Story by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

POINT LOMA, Calif. - When America was attacked Sept. 11, 2001, interest in supporting and showing appreciation for the military increased.

One Marine and his wife were shown how much they were appreciated when the television show "While You Were Out" remodeled their backyard.

A remodeling crew arrived at the home of Capt. Byron D. Sullivan, director of safety and standards, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232, after his wife, Catie, sent the show producers a heart-felt letter.

"When I wrote to them, I told them how I felt," she said. "I told them he is the most caring and compassionate person I know and that he goes out of his way to ensure people feel loved, needed and appreciated."

While her husband was stationed at Naval Air Station Fallon, Nev., for Top Gun school, a film crew arrived and tricked Sullivan into believing he was their subject for a documentary about Marine pilots in the school.

"The last week in Fallon the senior Marine at the school told me The Learning Channel was doing a documentary on Marine pilots in the integrated Top Gun course," the 29-year-old Havelock, N.C., native said. "But, little did I know the senior Marine and the public affairs office in Fallon were all involved in producing this fake documentary."

Sullivan said that during the interview they were asking him different questions about things that had nothing to do with Top Gun.

"They were asking me questions about my wife and my family," he said. "The answers to my questions were sent to the crew that was with my wife and they used the answers to help us win some of the extra furniture for our backyard."

Catie and the filming crew made a trip here Dec. 12 to shoot the opening sequence of the show.

"I wrote to the show in September

of 2003 and gave them a list of reasons why he deserved to have this done," she said. "I also told them it would be easy to work around his training schedule."

Catie added there was a little bit of a scare during the planning phase because Sullivan came home from Top Gun school for the Thanksgiving holiday.

"We had to really improvise because I was not expecting him to be home until his (Top Gun) course was finished," she said. "We were worried that he would find out. Needless to say he did not find out, but he said he knew something was going on."

Upon his return from Top Gun, Catie had to keep her husband busy because the crew remodeling the yard was not finished.

"I had to take him with me to the clothing store and have him help me pick out several outfits," Catie said. "Lucky for me he did not like any of the outfits I picked and that bought us some time back at the house."

Sullivan knew something was up, but could not quite figure it out.

"Catie keeping me out buying clothes was a giveaway that something was up. I thought she might have bought another house in our neighborhood because we had been looking at it before I went to the course," he said. "While we were at the clothing store I could not stop thinking about how much I wanted to go home."

Sullivan added that one of the best things about the items they won in the quiz portion of the show is that he can take them with him wherever they go.

"I will be leaving to go to the career course in Quantico soon, and I can take all this stuff with us," he said. "I can even leave it here and sell it with the house."

"While You Were Out" airs on The Learning Channel weekdays at 5 p.m. and on Fridays at 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Contact your local cable company for more information.

The episode featuring the Sullivan's airs in February.

Barracks Bash!

MALS-11 Marines enjoy time off with music, food, fun

Story by Cpl. James S. McGregor

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The barracks here were hopping Feb. 13 when Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 threw a barracks bash that featured team competitions, food, games and a live band performance.

Sgt. Shawn A. Vance, ground support equipment mechanic, MALS-11, and Noncommissioned Officer's Association president for MALS-11, said approximately 300 Marines and family members were expected to be present for the festivities.

"MALS-11 is the largest (logistics) squadron in the Marine Corps, which makes it more difficult to have unit cohesion," Vance said of the importance of getting as many Marines as possible to participate in the bash. "Most Marines know 15 to 20 percent of the rest of the Marines in the squadron, so events like these do a lot to increase unity and cohesion within the unit," the Erie, Penn., native added.

Unity building activities seen during the bash included numerous competitive and entertainment-oriented events: pie in the face, 4-man push-up competition, 2-man relay race, MALS-11 guide competition, devil dog talent showcase, dunk tank, spirit competition and a live performance by Stellar, the group that recently won the Single Marine Program Battle of the Bands competition here. According to Vance, these events will do a lot in



Marines and family members look on as Lt. Col. Shaugnessy A. Reynolds, commanding officer, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, attempts to sink a Marine in the dunk tank during the barracks bash Feb. 13. Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor

reaching the squadron's goals of bringing its Marines and family members closer.

"This event was an intro to the MALS becoming a tighter squadron - like a family," Vance explained. "The majority of people here are barracks Marines, but dates, guests and families are welcome."

Vance added the importance of keeping unity in a squadron that frequently rotates Marines in and out.

"This is for the Marines that are deploying as well. We'll constantly be deploying Marines, and if we build the teamwork here it will draw them closer, and they'll be tight and work together better when they're deployed and it really counts," Vance said. "We're going to maybe try things like this regularly because a survey showed us that Marines want stuff like this. The sky's the limit - it all just depends on their motivation and what they want."



Marines and family members gather to listen to a live performance by Stellar, during the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 barracks bash Feb. 13. The band recently won the Battle of the Bands competition here at the Enlisted Club 'Area 51.' Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor



Marines in Gore-Tex and rubber boots spin around until they start to fall down during the 2-man relay race, held during the Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11 barracks bash Feb. 13. *Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor*



Lance Cpl. Boid S. Wolff, aviation ordnance mechanic, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, gives his all during the 4-man team push-up competition at the Feb. 13 barracks bash. *Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor*



During the Feb. 13 barracks bash, Marines were asked to sign up for various competitions for a chance to win money, extra liberty or a chance to get out of field day formations. *Photo by Cpl. James S. McGregor*

1st FSSG Marine barber cuts it close in Kuwait

Story by Staff Sgt. Bill Lisbon

1st FSSG Combat Correspondent

CAMP VICTORY, Kuwait – Outside the bustling command center for the 1st Force Service Support Group here, sounds a low hum calling to all those with shaggy hair by Marine standards.

When the buzz ceases, a Marine throws back the tent flap and announces, “Who’s next?”

Outside, in true Marine expeditionary fashion, Sgt. Kimokeo K. Yogi sits his customers down in a folding chair and wraps them in a camouflage poncho while donning an old field-jacket liner as a smock for himself. Whatcha need? “Flat-top?” “Low fade?” “High reg?” “Horseshoe?” He’s got it covered. With deft hands, he sets to his work.

“I like making Marines look good,” he said.

“Barracks barbers” aren’t uncommon in the ranks, since Marines have strict hair standards, but for Yogi it has become his passion.

“I always put my whole heart in it,” he said.

Yogi, a 26-year-old native of Honolulu, has never gone to school for barbering. The Marines trained him to be a “wrench-turner,” i.e. a heavy-equipment mechanic. His trimming trade was more or less self-taught.

After graduating Farrington High School in Honolulu, his test scores weren’t high enough for the Air Force and Army. The Navy was out of the question on account of his personal “no bell-bottoms” rule. So his dad told him to check out the Marines, though Yogi recalls being dubious.

“Why would I join the Marines - a bunch of jarheads? I really didn’t think too high of the Marines,” he said.

He reconsidered, especially after discovering the prospect of being stationed in Okinawa, Japan, his ancestral home.

His great-grandfather, Kisho Yogi, moved from Okinawa to Hawaii in

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13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) Marines and Sailors along with *USS Peleliu* and *USS Germantown* personnel get dirty during a rugby game with the Stray Cats, a local Darwin, Australia, team Feb. 8. The interaction with the Australians gave the players insight on the strategy, tradition and camaraderie of the sport. At the end of the game, the Australian and American teams barbecued food and enjoyed a couple of beers while forming new friendships formed through a friendly game of rugby. Photo by Lance Cpl. Chad H. Leddy

‘Fighting 13th’ MEU kicks back, plays rugby down under in Australia

Story by Sgt. Mark P. Ledesma

13th MEU Combat Correspondent

DARWIN, Australia – Marines and Sailors aboard the *USS Peleliu* and *USS Germantown* recently enjoyed liberty during a port visit in Darwin, Australia, the first liberty port 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) personnel visited since departing the Fifth Fleet in late January for an early trip home to San Diego.

Marines and Sailors flooded the streets of Darwin during the five day visit Feb. 4 through 8, taking full advantage of being away from the iron-clad vessel and vast ocean, which many have been accustomed to since leaving Jebel Ali, United Arab Emirates late December. Many decided to spend their hard-earned deployment pay to sleep in a hotel room in the city.

“Spending the night out in town gave me the opportunity to take a real shower and sleep in a real bed, as opposed to a rack that I can barely fit in,” said Staff Sgt. Monica Brooks, 13th MEU (SOC) Command Element Nuclear, Biological and Chemical chief. “It gives you a change of scenery, you breath some fresh air, relax and have a good time.”

Along with spending the night in the city, many took the opportunity to volunteer their time reaching out to the local community by participating in a one-day community relations project coordinated by the MEU chaplain and his assistant.

According to Petty Officer 2nd Class Bien V. Duong, 13th MEU Command Element chaplain’s assistant, MEU Marines and Sailors participated in six different community relations projects in different parts of the city.

The projects involved landscaping, painting and cleaning of several of the city’s schools and churches, and preparing and serving meals at a homeless shelter.

“We had around 46 people who signed up, which we evenly assigned to a project

site,” he said.

According to Duong, most of the projects started at around 9 a.m. and ended around 2 p.m. the second day in Darwin.

Most of the assigned work was completed by the volunteers in the limited time they had, said Duong. “We had a lot of positive feed back,” he added. “The place where I was at, St. Paul, the people were very grateful. This was the first time they’ve ever had military volunteers.”

While some were volunteering to clean up, other MEU Marines along with Germantown and Peleliu personnel got a little dirty during several friendly games of rugby with local teams.

Marines and Sailors from the Peleliu practiced their rugby skills for two months in the Peleliu’s dim hangar bay at night finally got a chance to show what they had in an open field against the Stray Cats, a local Darwin team.

The Peleliu team, comprised of mostly beginners who gained interest in the sport on board ship, showed the opposition they were able to hold their own when they tied the game, 1-1, with the more experienced Australians.

“Everybody just came out there to have a good time,” said Lance Cpl. Mike C. Hopp, Landing Support specialist, MEU Service Support Group 13.

According to Hopp, the interaction with the Australians also gave them a lot of insight on the strategy, tradition and camaraderie of the sport of rugby. At the end of the game, the two teams barbecued food and enjoyed beer while forming new friendships.

Another experience many Marines and Sailors took advantage of was a visit to Australia’s famous Outback.

Capt. Trea Schocken, MSSG-13 Transportation Support Detachment commander, said a fine balance between outback tours and city life made her time in Darwin a great experience.

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Sgt. Kimokeo K. Yogi, a self-taught barber, cuts it close outside the 1st Force Service Support Group's command center in Camp Victory, Kuwait, on Feb. 16, 2004. Yogi, a 26-year-old native of Honolulu, has been moonlighting as a barber since 1995, shortly after joining the Marine Corps, and cut his fellow Marines' hair during Operation Iraqi Freedom in addition to his regular duties. Yogi, currently working in the 1st FSSG's units movement control center, is one of approximately 25,000 Marines deploying to Iraq in coming months. Photo by Staff Sgt. Bill Lisbon



James Fowler, outfielder, finishes a run to first base during softball tryouts at Field 4 here Feb. 17. The base varsity team, who has won the past two West Coast Marine Corps Regional Softball Tournaments, is holding tryouts until May for anyone who is interested in playing on the team. Photo by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

Softball players slide into position on varsity team

Story by Lance Cpl. John Sayas

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The two-time defending champion varsity softball team here has been looking to make a few changes as they began tryouts recently in an attempt to gain new talent for the upcoming softball season.

After three tryout sessions over the past couple weeks, Joe Evans, varsity team head coach, sees his team as possible contenders for another championship, but only after he sorts through the new talent he is looking to have on the team this year.

He said he has only eight returning players from last year's team that won the West

Coast Marine Corps Regional Softball Tournament.

"I am going to put the best 10 guys out onto the field," he said.

One of the biggest differences compared to last year's team is power. Evans said the lineup last year was full of big hitters that had potential to hit balls out of the ballpark on command.

This year, however, a little less power will cause him to change the team's strategy as they look for more base hitting and running. He also has to deal with veteran players who may not be available right away due to injuries or deployments.

"There is a lot of work we need to do,"

Evans said. "There are a lot of rust and mental situations that are going to be fixed by going over them and practicing them."

Tyrone Butler, who has played for the varsity team here the past two years, is excited to be able to play again after being involved in a serious car accident last November. The All-Armed Forces and All-Marine Softball player is still recovering from knee injuries suffered in the accident, but said he expects to be playing at 100 percent by the time the Marine Corps West Coast Softball Regionals begin in August at Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Center, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Butler echoed his coach's concern with

the team's reduction in power within the lineup.

"We have a lot of new guys, but I think we are still going to be pretty good," he said. "We have a lot of good sticks but just not that power that Miramar is use to having."

He said with their speed and hitting abilities, they can still be a competitive team. He also expects to see veteran players providing guidance and leadership to the younger and less experienced players on the team.

"We just out hit everybody last year," Butler said. "It's totally different this year. We are going to have work base hitting and

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Chapel weekly schedule of events

Holy Family Catholic Community

- ♦ Mass: 11 a.m. Sunday, 11:30 a.m. weekdays.
- ♦ Rosary: 10:30 a.m. Sunday.
- ♦ Confession: 10:15 a.m. Sunday or for appointments call Father Berchmanz at 577-1333.
- ♦ Religious classes for children for first communion, confirmation: 9:30-10:45 a.m. Sunday.
- ♦ Youth gathering and planning following mass Sunday.
- ♦ Baptism: Normally the first Sunday of the month. Call the chaplain's office for details.
- ♦ Marriage: Call chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ♦ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA). Call chaplain's office for details.
- ♦ Scripture Class: 7 p.m. Wednesday in Chapel classroom.
- ♦ Choir Practice: 6 p.m. Wednesday in Main Chapel.

Liturgical Christian

- ♦ Sunday: Choir rehearsal at 9 a.m.
Liturgical worship at 9:30 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children Bible study at 10:45 a.m. Young Adults Fellowship at 5:30 p.m.
- ♦ Tuesday: Morning prayer group (Room 4) at 6 a.m.
Contemporary Gospel Service at 7:30 p.m.
- ♦ Wednesday: Crafts and conversation at 9 a.m. Free childcare provided.
Women's bible study at 10:45 a.m.
Baptist service at 7 p.m.
- ♦ Thursday: Liturgical choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.
- ♦ Friday: Baptist bible study at 7 p.m.

Jewish

- ♦ First Friday of the month at MCRD San Diego at 7 p.m.
- ♦ Last Friday of the month in Edson Range Chapel Camp Pendleton at 7:30 p.m.

3rd MAW Deployment Family Info Line

For information on deploying Marines, call the Dictaphone at 1-877-616-8762 or call the 3rd MAW Family Readiness Officer at 577-7397/7294.

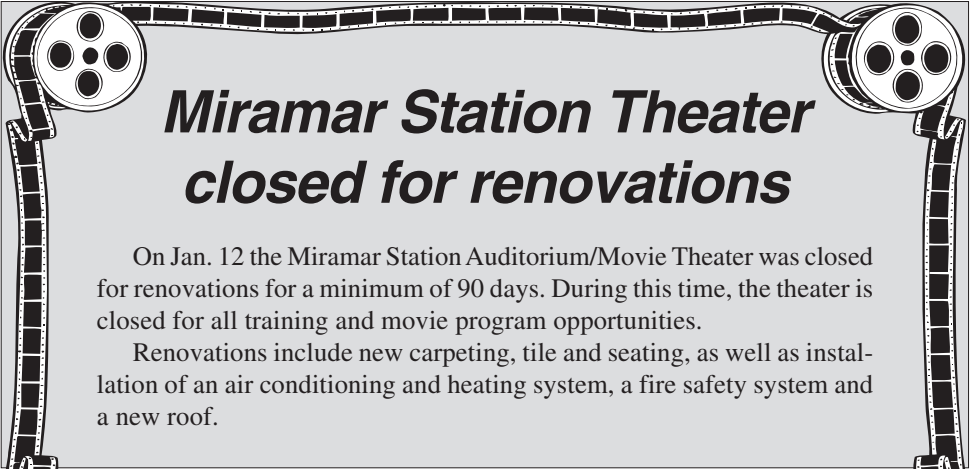
Fire volunteers receive commendation

The Board of Directors of the Lakeside Fire Protection District on Feb. 10 formally

commended Marines from the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing for their actions in providing resources that directly impacted the emergency needs of the citizens and property of San Diego County.

The Board also recognized the Marines for their quick response to help provide water, lighting and shelter to the victims of the fires that swept through San Diego County in Oct. 2003.

The wildland fires, including the Cedar Fire, burned more than 273,000 acres, destroying 2,810 structures and left 14 fatalities.



Miramar Station Theater closed for renovations

On Jan. 12 the Miramar Station Auditorium/Movie Theater was closed for renovations for a minimum of 90 days. During this time, the theater is closed for all training and movie program opportunities.

Renovations include new carpeting, tile and seating, as well as installation of an air conditioning and heating system, a fire safety system and a new roof.

Young Adult Fellowship

Miramar Chapel hosts a pizza and a movie special every Sunday from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m..

The inter-faith and non-denominational chapel social features movies with underlying theological content explained.

Free pizza and refreshments are provided.

Movies being shown are Seabiscuit on Feb. 22 and Meet Joe Black on Feb. 29.

For more information, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Scorekeepers needed

The Semper Fit Sports Office is looking for scorekeepers to participate in their Intramurals Program.

Interested individuals will be trained and paid by the Miramar Officials Association.

For more information, contact Milt Cartwright, MOA president at (858) 695-9232.

30+ basketball league

The 30 and older basketball league registration ends Feb. 25.

The league begins Mar. 4 and game times are Thursdays at 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m at

the Semper Fit Center.

Registration fee is \$50 per player and player draft is Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. at the Semper Fit Center and team captains are needed.

All active duty, family members and Department of Defense personnel are eligible to participate with military ID.

If you would like to be a captain or for more information, call 577-1202.

Battle Color ceremony

Miramar will host the U.S. Marine Battle Color Ceremony on the flightline at Base Operations, building 9211, at 3:30 p.m. on Mar. 1. This event is open to Department of Defense employees and their families.

Three elements of the U.S. Battle Color Detachment set the Battle Color Ceremony apart: the Battle Colors, the Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Silent Drill Platoon.

The Battle Colors are the official colors of the Marine Corps. Forty-seven streamers atop the Marine Corps Flag represent the battles, campaigns and expeditions Marines have participated in since its inception more than two centuries ago.

The Drum and Bugle Corps is commonly referred to as "The Commandant's Own." The Silent Drill Platoon will become the central focus, performing in perfect symmetry.

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1910. Both his grandfather and father were military men - the former, George Kibin Yogi, served with the Army in Germany in World War II. His father, Karl N. Yogi, retired from the Air Force as a staff sergeant.

After joining the Marine Corps in 1995, Yogi knew he liked his hair short. But after many weekly trips to the barber's shop, he often emerged dissatisfied with how his hair came out.

While stationed at Yuma, Ariz., he took things into his own hands. He bought his own clippers, started cutting his own hair (in his trademark "horse-shoe") while constantly questioning barbers about techniques.

Being half-Okinawan, Yogi's next duty station was a blessing. In Okinawa, where he spent three years, he got in touch with his roots. He immersed himself in the local culture and brushed up on his dormant Japanese, which he learned as a boy, as well as Hogen, Okinawa's native tongue. Helping him along the way, both in language and his newfound skill, were Okinawan barbers.

Then family tragedy stuck, and Yogi

transferred back to the United States to be near his mother, Mary-Kathleen Stewart, who suffered a stroke. He was assigned to the Inspector/Instructor Staff in San Jose, Calif., which oversaw Marine reservists.

Isolated from a large military community, Yogi quickly learned that barbers familiar with Marine haircuts were scarce, and some Marines were paying upwards of \$20 for haircuts. Also, Yogi noticed that a lot of the reservists showing up for the monthly drills had messed up hair or no haircut at all.

"It gave me lots of practice," he said.

He also found it therapeutic. Around this time, he and his wife, Rendel, were expecting their first child, and there was a chance of medical complications. With this coming on the heels of his mother's stroke, cutting hair gave him an escape from some of the daily stress.

His wife gave birth to a healthy girl, Karena. Soon after, Yogi was re-assigned to the 1st Force Service Support Group, based in Camp Pendleton, Calif. There he coordinated heavy-equipment operations during the months before deploying to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While the Marines were stuffing their sea bags with extra socks and baby wipes, Yogi packed his clippers.

During the war, Yogi's buzzing could be heard from Camp Coyote in Kuwait to Logistical Support Area Viper in Iraq.

His reputation grew and Marines of all ranks sought him out for a fresh trim, even at the height of some of the worst sandstorms.

"I heard a lot of people were happy when they heard I was coming back out here because they knew they could get their haircut," said Yogi, who currently works in the 1st FSSG's unit movement control center in Kuwait.

Unfortunately for Yogi, the job isn't full-time. The Marine Corps doesn't have official barber billets; all barbers on base are civilians. If he leaves the ranks when his contract is up in August 2005, Yogi plans to go to school to become a licensed, professional barber.

"There's a lot of stuff I still need to learn," said Yogi.

Until then, he'll remain the 1st FSSG's unofficial forward-deployed barber.

"The barber shop's never closed for me over here," he said.

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"By day you're hiking through beautiful gorges, swimming under waterfalls or on a boat tour watching crocs jump out of the river and at night it's great food, good music and just the nicest people," said Schocken. "We were eating lunch on a tour, and all of a sudden a kangaroo bounded across the field. That made my day.

"Our tour guide apologized one day that the Litchfield National Park seemed to just look like this vast expanse of green foliage," said Schocken.

"After the neverending views of water or sand we saw on this deployment, I don't think any of us minded seeing all those trees. Besides, we're on the way home, so as they say in Australia, 'She's Humpty Doo!' which means everything's just fine," she added.

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concentrate on utilizing other skills."

Tryouts are every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Thursday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Field 4 located across from the Sports Complex here.

For more information, call 577-8259 or call the Athletics Office at 577-1202.